Design Resource

Wall Painting

Using the Wall as a Canva

by
Prof. Sumant Rao and Ruchi Shah
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/wall-painting

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2. History of Wall Painting
3. Distance
4. Space
5. Creating the Visual
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Introduction

A few thousand years, before the dawn of history when man was only a cave dweller, he painted his rock shelters to express and satisfy his aesthetic sensitivity and creative urge. These walls served the purpose of recording animals, hunting and daily life in the civilization. In today's context, apart from serving its purpose of carrying information, a wall painting covers multiple functions like - defining and decorating a space, branding or artistic expression and public expression through community gatherings. For instance, a wall painting was created within Facebook's office in India, they are being done on the Tulsi pipe road in Mumbai to beautify it, or they are designed to add to the exotic interiors of restaurants.

In this section we shall see how a wall is painted for an indoor space. Before we trace the process let us glance through its history.

for about three to four months due to the dry season or low rainfall, so spinning is the best occupation. Gandhi saw this as the end of dependency on imported items and the best possible way to develop the masses' skills. Through this, he wished to lop the gap between the rich and the poor by developing a mechanism that acknowledges hand-labor importance.

After Independence, the Indian government established the All India Khadi and Village Industries Board, which in 1957 came to be known as the Khadi Village and Industries Commission (KVIC). There are many places in India, which are making khadi fabric. Well known among them is the Ponduru Khadi from the Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh.

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History of Wall Painting

Wall paintings can be called Murals. They can be created by working directly onto a wall. A characteristic of murals is the way they incorporate architectural elements seamlessly into the artwork. Murals dating right from the Upper Paleolithic Age to the Egyptian era have been discovered. The word 'mural' became more popularly used after the Mexican ' Muralista' Art Movement.

From all the various styles and methods of creating wall paintings – 'Murals'; the best known technique is the fresco, which combines a lime wash and natural water soluble colours. Ajanta – Ellora caves, caves from the Kaimur range, some parts of Uttar Pradesh and the rock shelters of Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh are the earliest evidences of wall paintings in India.

In today's context, wall paintings serve different purposes. Not only do they bring art into a public space, the artists also receive more recognition. One can find artworks around different parts of the city. They are also used effectively for social causes and political messages. Graffiti – a type of wall painting has often been created against the law, however, now due to their particular style and popularity they are commissioned by pubs, bars and restaurants.

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Traditional Murals:
In India they were created by people on the walls inside and outside their homes, identifying their tribes, religious beliefs and so on. Today people can be found commissioning such murals to express their personal choices and individuality. This feature has increased commissioned work amongst artists across the world. Incorporating certain messages and elements according to the theme, hand painted murals serve different purposes for hospitals, corporate offices and schools.

Graffiti style Murals:
Owing to their popularity, graffiti and street art are slowly creating a different genre of contemporary wall painting. Artists like Keith Haring, ABOVE, amongst many more have created a niche for themselves allowing them to take their street art into urban landscapes of the offices of corporate clients. This trend has continued across the world including India.

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The BMX Gang regularly does graffiti under the London South Bank Centre, on the River Thames, London.

It is important to understand the various aspects of wall painting which are:

- Distance,
- Space,
- Creating the visual,
- Materials and tools
- Process of execution.

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Distance

Size and distance have to be understood carefully. If the wall is huge and located outdoors on a road, the area from which it can be viewed is more. This opens a possibility that the visual can be more bold and bigger, with fewer details. It could also be created in a way where the entire visual should be visible only when viewed from a distance. But indoors, one has to consider the lighting the architectural elements, since the area for viewing is lesser, the visual could be bold, but could have some details.

Fig: Stick figure graffiti near Brick lane, Shoreditch, London. This area has been revived by wall painting / graffiti artists and now has a number of art galleries, shops, pubs and creative community activities.

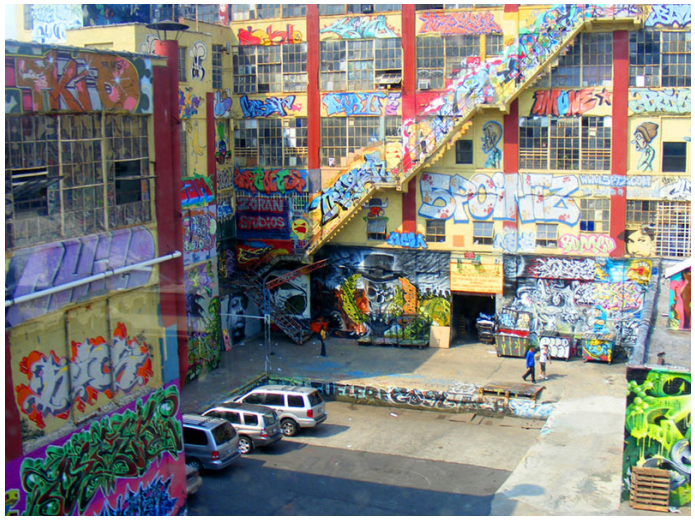

Fig: This building in Long Island City, New York, USA is completely covered in graffiti.

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Space

Is the space squarish, or a long rectangle? Is it indoors or outdoors? Is it an office space, a school playground, an abandoned building or a coffee shop? Is it neat and finished or, is it unfinished and textured? How is the lighting, natural, artificial, dull or blindingly bright? Can we use any of these qualities to our advantage while making the visual? Or, should one create the visual carefully considering all these aspects? Each space will demand a different understanding and treatment.

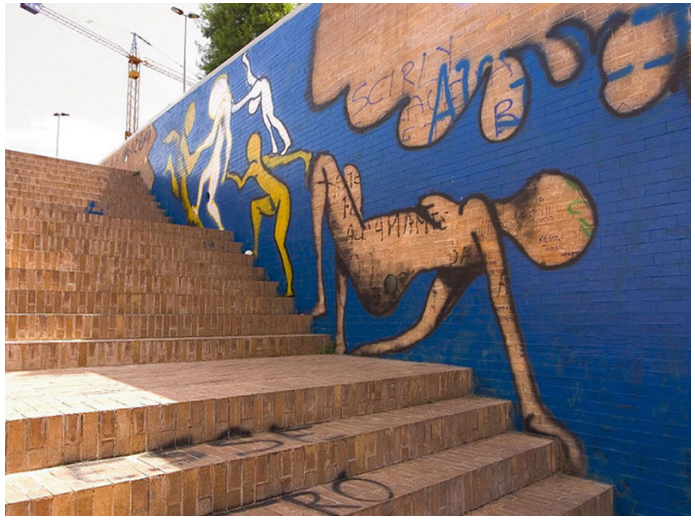

Fig: An interesting use of space: This graffiti was on the steps up from the Bus Station in the old town of Fermo, Italy.

Fig: Post - Apocalypse project: An indoor wall painting by artists created for the project.

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Creating the Visual

It could be treated differently by different artists depending on their chosen theme. The choice will obviously depend upon the nature of the space and its audience. Whether it is a school, or an office, or just a fun community activity in the city centre. The visual could be socially relevant, or just a drawing of favourite idols, or even a way to express personal opinions. A visual can be sketched out effectively to suit the space and communicate whatever the artist wishes to. He has to decide which elements need to be big, which remain small and detailed, the flow of eye movement across the visual and the parts of the visual that could be exaggerated. Colours should be well thought of, does the visual demand vibrancy or just the boldness of black and white?

A lot of street painting artists create and compose directly onto the wall, and their creations are an intuitive form of expression. This process is similar to an artist creating a work of art on a canvas. But just as in any design process, if a mural needs to be created for a specific function or purpose, following a process helps. So a good understanding of the distance of viewing and the space along with the theme can give birth to a good design and help in the execution to bring this design to fruition.

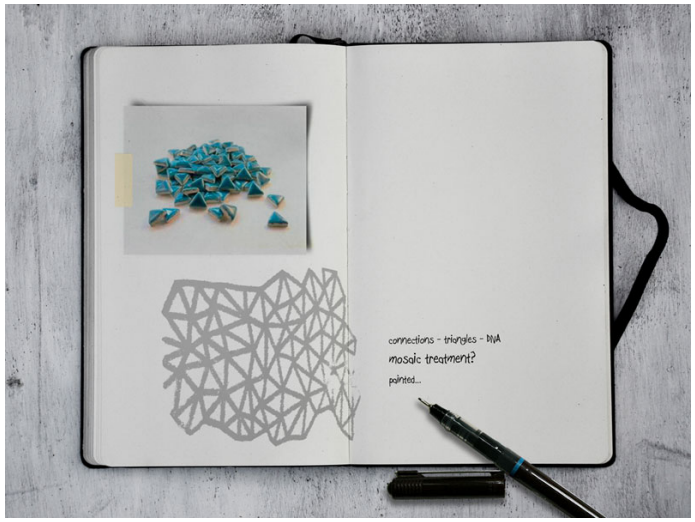

Fig: You can have a sketchbook with some images, inspirations and ideas jotted down.

Fig: This artist could have taken inspiration from certain forms, elements, words etc, before creating the image

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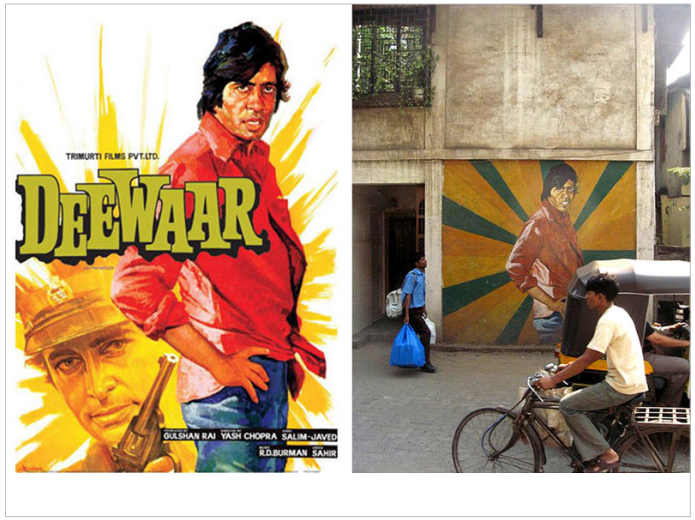

Fig: Using a reference image is also helpful. For instance, this wall art created in a street in Mumbai depicting Amitabh Bachchan was created from his movie poster - 'Deewar' a Bollywood film.

• Sketching in a book helps in visualizing.
• Once some elements are fixed on paper they could be scanned and digitized, the entire visual could be created bit - by - bit on the computer.
• The exact dimensions of the wall can be mapped into a grid which could be used as a reference layer on Adobe Photoshop (or any similar image editing software). The created visuals can be fit onto this grid which can be used while actually painting on the wall.

This process is also extremely useful and fun when doing collaborative projects. One can get a clear idea how the different styles of the collaborators can be fused within the same space even before the actual work on the mural is commenced.

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Materials and Tools

Before beginning the final visual, a small budget and list of materials could be prepared, which need to be used for the wall painting.

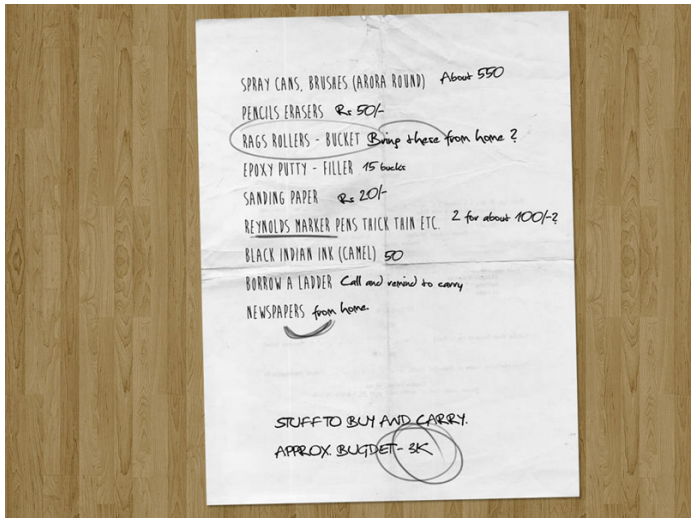
SPRAY CANS, BRUSHES (ARORA ROUND) About 550
PENCILS ERASERS Rs 50/-
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Fig: Preparing a list helps decide what is already available and what needs to be brought. List of Materials:

Fig: By following a rough sketched out visual, you can choose and buy colours accordingly. You can also have customized colours prepared.

• To keep the space neat: Dusting cloths, newspapers, rags, sponges and some water.

• For the wall: Scrapers, sanding paper, white filling cement (for cracks and holes), and an evener (to even out the wall), white washing paint, rollers, thick brushes.

• For creating the visual: Pencils, erasers, pens, Customized paints, round and flat brushes of required sizes, Spray cans, Alcohol refillable markers, Coloured markers, inks etc.

• If needed: A projector could also be useful for indoor spaces.

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The Process

The Process includes:
- Preparing the Surface
- Applying the Base Colours
- Details

Preparing the Surface:

• Cover the floor and surrounding areas to avoid being spoilt during the process of execution. After all your creation is supposed to be an integral part of the space and not the center of it.

• Remove any unwanted abrasions and marks using scrapers to scrape of the top layer of the wall. Even older, unwanted layers of paints can be removed up to an extent.

• Smoothen the surface using a high grade of sanding paper and rub it onto the wall until you achieve the smoothness you want. This is probably a little time consuming but important as it forms the base of your painting.

• Fill any broken corners, or gaping holes in the wall with the white cement putty. Give this a couple of hours to dry. After that, sand it off once more to ensure smoothness.

• Depending on the look of the visual, you may choose to whitewash the wall or with whatever colour that is making up the background of your image. Use good quality brushes and rollers to even out the paint and leave minimal texture onto the wall.

• You may choose to not whitewash in case you would like to let the original texture of your space come through, but you might need some base for binding your paint onto the surface that needs painting. Leave this to dry completely overnight.

Fig: After scraping and filling the wall with cement putty, this is how the wall has to be evened out.

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Applying the Base Colours:

• You may use a projector to project the reference visual you have prepared, from the computer onto the wall to trace out the lines.

• Based on the reference visual, block out the big patches of paint which need to be applied as base colours.

• Using these colours apply the bigger patches of paint using a brush and roller. Leave this for another night to dry completely.

Fig: Applying the base coat, and leaving it to dry.

Details:

Now you can begin working on the visual, draw out the lines, fill up spaces, shaded areas if needed etc. There is a possibility that while drawing in the final space, changes occur naturally, this is quite normal. Allow yourself this flexibility so as to push your design even further in the actual creation process.

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Case Study

In this module the wall painting is for the interiors of an web agency office located on the 4th floor of a building overlooking London Bridge- a busy, bustling area of London. The wall is a part of the entrance passage into the small office. It was needed to create a visually impactful wall that is impressive and adds to their company's branding.

The Brief:
The painting had to represent an extended version of the cityscape, and the out of the box solutions that the agency created for its clientele. Even the colours that had to be used, had to connect with their branding.

Distance

Space

Creating the Visual

Tools and Materials

Process

Final Execution

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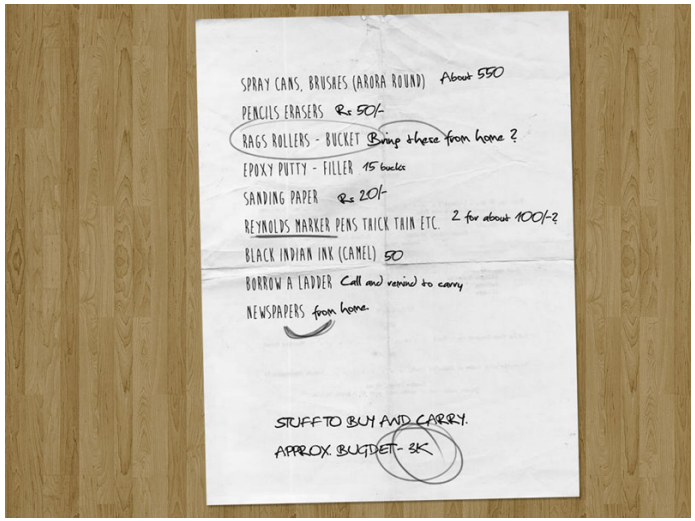
Distance

• The size of the wall at 25 ft X 8ft in comparison to the 1500 sq ft office that lays ahead.

• Before entering into the office the mural can be viewed only through the glass door entrance. Which means that, that particular space of the wall painting has to be carefully done in order to create an artwork that is attention grabbing.

• This passage is only 7 feet wide, which means that the viewer does not have much of a distance to view it from. The art work should be clear as it will not be viewed from a distance.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Dimensions giving a rough idea as to how much space is available for viewing the artwork.
And the proportions of the area to be painted upon.

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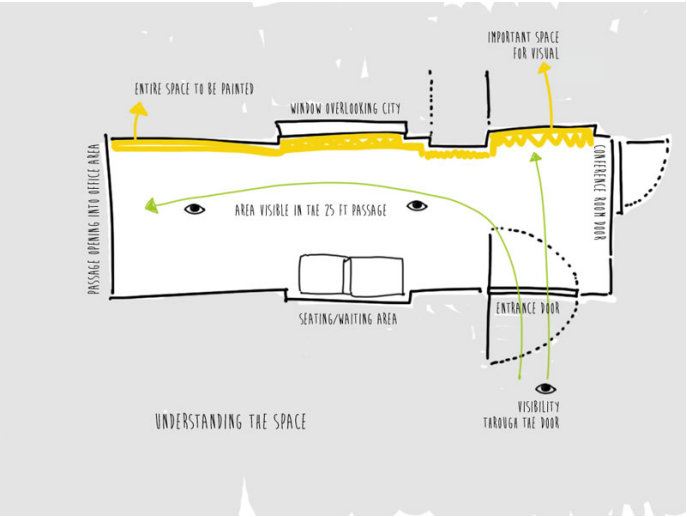
Space

The space to be painted upon for this module has beams, niches, and a window. As they are geometrical and 90 degrees in nature one can use them as a grid by applying flat patches of colour to create the background. A long seamless graphic will run across the space enhancing its linearity, has been sketched out.



Architectural diagram explain the space and the movement through it.

Space visible through the glass door at the entrance of the office.

Space visible through the glass door at the entrance of the office.

The long wall after the window, towards the office area.

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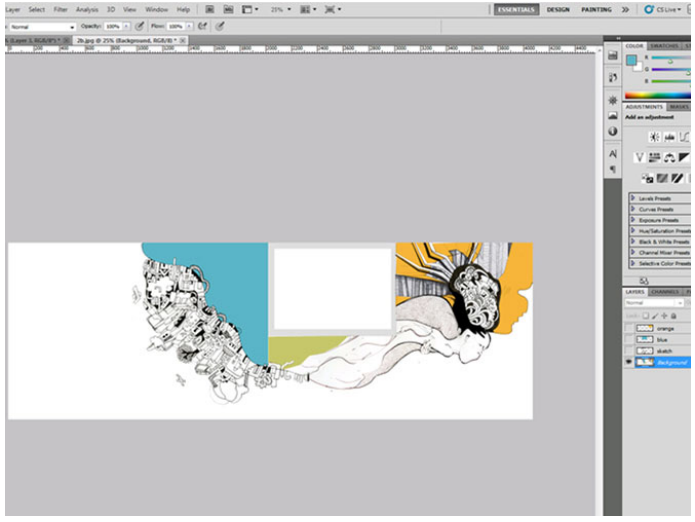
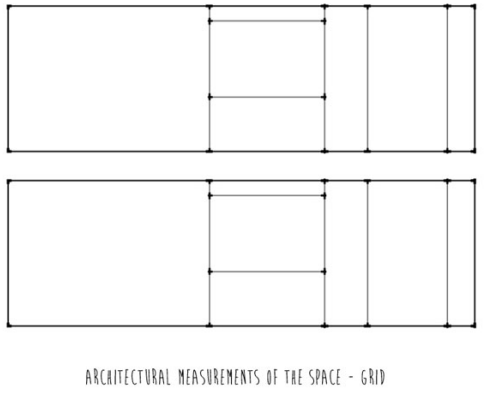
Creating the Visual

Doodling in the sketchbook while coming up with the idea.

Doodling in the sketchbook while coming up with the idea.



Scanning the sketches and taking them into Photoshop, to place them in a grid.



Architectural grid of the space, that can help maintain the proportions while sketchin

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Tools and Materials

The basic tools and materials used are:

- Thick brushes, Round brushes, Flat brushes,
- White markers, Thin and Thick Markers.
- Customized paints, Spray cans,
- Indian ink, Refilling ink,
- Cello tapes, Masking tapes,
- News papers,
- Pencils, Erasers,
- Rollers,
- Scissors,
- Sanding paper,
- Sponge, Dusting Cloths.

Customized paints, rollers, thick brushes, sanding paper, Indian ink, White markers, sponge, cello tapes, masking tapes, round brushes, pencils erasers, scissors.

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Spray cans, refilling ink, flat brushes, news papers, thin and thick markers.

Dusting cloths that are laid out to prevent the floor, or space around from getting messy.

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Process

Sanding, scrubbing and evening out the wall. Followed by whitewashing.

Painting out the bigger patches of colour which are lime green and bright orange.

Projecting the visual onto the wall, in order to trace out lightly the lines of the drawing.

Working on the final drawing with paints, markers and pens.

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Final Execution

The finally completed visual.

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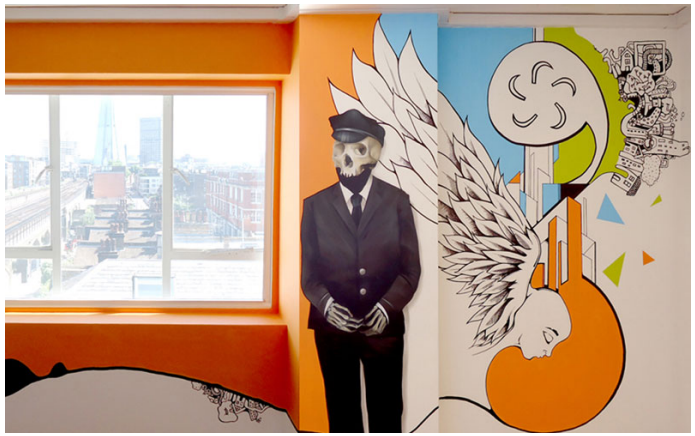

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https://dsource.in/resource/wall-painting/links

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Links

Links of images used from Creative Common:

- www.flickr.com/photos/ahron/257680239/sizes/l/in/photostream
- www.flickr.com/photos/gustaffo89/3455251905/sizes/l/in/photostream
- www.flickr.com/photos/mckaysavage/1981186788/sizes/l/in/photostream
- www.flickr.com/photos/abhishekshirali/7919921212/sizes/l/in/photostream
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- upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/ff/Padampani_Ajanata_caves_India.JPG
- www.flickr.com/photos/jamiejohn/3912575885/sizes/o/in/photostream
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- www.flickr.com/photos/soniabelviso/8044395420/sizes/k/in/photostream
- www.flickr.com/photos/usarmyafrica/5663823448/sizes/o/in/photostream
- www.flickr.com/photos/teleyinex/2582717261/sizes/o/in/photostream

Links that can be referred to for wall painting:

- www.thewallproject.com
- www.noupe.com/inspiration/60-marvellous-wall-paintings-and-3-d-street-art.html

http://abduzeedo.com/20-beautiful-wall-paintings

- www.popularmechanics.com/home/improvement/interior-painting-tips-how-to-paint-your-walls-like-a-pro#slide-1
- vimeo.com/search?q=wall+painting

Design Resource

Wall Painting

Using the Wall as a Canva

by
Prof. Sumant Rao and Ruchi Shah
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/wall-painting/video

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Video

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/wall-painting/contact-details

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Contact Details

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